181 565 555 first a bewildered refugee, but gradually assumed the role of a labourer rising in the ranks. The case indicates the mobility of the Burmese family and shows clearly that it may function successfully outside of the confines of its original social atmosphere.

182 ●594 621 156 The family in Burmese society: The successful mobility of U Myaing's family indicate that the immediate family is the primary social unit of Burmese society. The Burmese community is then a congregation of immediate families who engage in activities of mutual benefit within the protective framework of the village structure. This interpretation high lights a particular type of individualism which is a family- individualism depending on the roles of each [779] member of the family for its full expression. This concept seems tied to the Buddhist idea of individual salvation through acts of merit on the one hand and the exigencies of gaining a livelihood on the other. [474] The family is the basic economic unit and though it will enter cooperative endeavours (like the IN fisheries, or communal nat propitiations), has the ultimate responsibility and capabilities of support- [596] ing itself. The extended family is important, as indeed is the total village social structure, only in so far as it contributes to the maintenance of the individual immediate family of procreation including spouses, offspring and aged parents. The "looseness" of the social structure conversely allows mobility of the immediate families. This analysis indicates that attempts at modernizing of the Burmese people (acculturation) should meet with a minimum of structural obstacles - such as caste, clan and rigid associations might present.

181 156 369 555 The Burmese culture pattern and the individual: The village culture pattern is dominated by a series of relatively simple, interrelated ideas held by all. Each individual feels himself temporily occupying a particular situation which is only one of many existences and but an instant in eternity. He is fated to be a member of a particular family with a set of opportunities through life. Life should be pleasant and must be virtuous if future existences are to be pleasant. He must realise as fully as possible the talents and opportunities that come to him through his KARMA situation. In the villages this concept is a great stabilising force and tends to make an individual content with

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

38. yauccá Husband (referential). 601
39. mù Husband's younger brother; husband's younger sister's husband.
40. khɛ̀ʔóu Elder sister's husband; husband's elder brother; husband's elder sister's husband.
41. yaummà Husband's sister; husband's brother's wife.

As may readily be seen by inspection of the charts, this kinship system reflects clearly the bilateral family structure, with an absence of terminological differentiation on the basis of the sex of the connecting relative. The other outstanding characteristic is the recognition of relative age at many points. For each generation a distinct set of terms is used. On ego's generation all cousins are merged with siblings; the terms are differentiated, however, according to relative age. In the first ascending generation, it will be noted, parents' siblings are terminologically distinguished according to degree of age relative to the parent. In the first descending generation, however, the factor of age loses significance; sex is the sole differentiating factor, apart from distinguishing terms for ego's own children. On successive descending generations sex distinction is absent and all relatives of a single generation are subsumed under a single kinship term.

Behaviorally as well as terminologically, relative age is the all-important hub upon which the wheel of Burmese social life revolves. Deference to one's elders is reflected in such customs as carrying things for them, refraining from sitting with one's head higher than those of elders, and avoiding postures in which the feet are extended towards such persons. 561 602 [516]

Beyond such matters of etiquette, the importance of age is even more fundamentally demonstrated in the showing of obeisance to one's elders. This is done on all the important ceremonial occasions. Four such occasions are regarded as obligatory times for paying one's respects. These are the beginning and the end of the Buddhist "Lent"—a period of about three months, roughly from mid-July to mid-October—the New Year, and the harvest. Respect is paid to all of one's elders in the parental generation and above. A visit is made at which an offering, valuable or symbolic, is brought and the elder's blessings are received. [178]

SOCIAL RELATIONS OF KIN

Husband–Wife. The household is normally composed of husband and wife and their offspring. It is a bilateral, limited type of family structure, contrasting markedly with the patrilineal extended Chinese family and joint family of India. Unlike the position of the wife in the Chinese and Indian family systems, that of the Burmese wife is not one of an outsider living in a group dominated by her 593 [592] [594]

[Text continues on page 442]